

Saturday Journal

A POPULAR PAPER.

THE SATURDAY JOURNAL

WEEKLY FOR PLEASURE & PROFIT

Vol. II.

BEADLE AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
William St., corner of Platt.

NEW YORK, MARCH 18, 1871.

TERMS \$2.00 per Annum in advance.
\$1.00 for Four Months.

No. 53.



"Before high Heaven I swear you shall never stand at the altar as Bertrand Haight's wife!"

OATH-BOUND; OR, THE MASKED BRIDE.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
Author of "The Shadowed Heart," "The Scarlet Crescent," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST TOKEN OF THE STORM.

The last brilliant tints of an autumn sun were streaming brightly over the lawn at Edenwilde, lighting up with richly-warm glories the spacious mansion, whose many windows caught the sunlight, reflecting it again in a blaze of molten goldenness.

Far off, to the west, the Hudson river was sweeping by, a veritable belt of flame, under that orange sky; eastward, skirting the rear of Edenwilde, were the solemn Highlands, crowned with their glowing, frost-touched jewels.

Before the front piazza, all white pillars and floored, and from whence Crystel Roscoe was watching the lights and shadows as they flickered and swayed on the close-cut, velvety greenward, stretched the large lawn, adorned by far-spreading trees, and low, bushy shrubs, with here and there a gleaming marble Ceres or Diana, and a dainty Niope, all a-sprinkled from the spray of the shelled fountain, that tinkled and showered over the bright green mosses and pink-lipped sea-shells.

It was a vast, glorious inheritance, this that belonged to the proud, wealthy Roscoes for many a past generation, and fair Crystel Roscoe, while gazing upon the beauties of the old ancestral home, felt her heart beat anew, as she remembered she was a Roscoe.

And a fit representative she was, with her aristocratic beauty of face and form, no less than of mind and heart.

As she sat thus, her white dress lying in thick, graceful negligence around her, and a scarlet silken shawl thrown over one shoulder, her beautiful dark-brown eyes resting in admiration on the fair landscape, you would have stopped to gaze again at the satin-brown hair, without ripple or wave to mar its ivory smoothness; at the earnest, honest, withal haughty eyes, that held the true Roscoe self-importance.

She was fair, and noble, and brave, and true, and all this nobility she had promised to Bertrand Haight, whose Tower walls rose grim and gray, just over the sunny-bosomed river.

Bertrand Haight! it was he of whom she was thinking, as she mutely caressed the betrothal-ring on her dainty finger; dreaming of the blissful days they had spent since he had won her, while the spring green was just blooming; wondering if the future

She spoke with a courtly grace that denoted her refinement and education; and as she concluded, she handed Crystel a card.

"It is my name," she said, briefly.

Crystel read the address. It was a name she had never heard before, nor was ever likely to forget, so unique and melodious was it:

"UNDINE DEL ROSE."

"I have never heard of you, Miss Del Rose. There surely must be a mistake. There are never visitors at Edenwilde except invited guests or friends."

She was as freezing as an iceberg, but the stranger did not resent the remark.

"As I said, I desire to see you, Miss Crystel Roscoe, and as you do not design to extend to me even the slightest courtesies of hospitality, let me at once inform you why I am here. Miss Crystel, you are engaged to be married to Bertrand Haight?"

Crystel flushed indignantly at the sudden question, asked so sharply.

"I can't see that it interests you, Miss Del Rose."

"But it does. I have come to Edenwilde to ascertain if the rumor be true; because, if it be true—"

She paused, fixing her penetrating eyes on Crystel's sweet face.

"And if it be?"

Miss Roscoe asked it haughtily.

"Then, my mission will be one of bitter woefulness to you, Miss Crystel."

A sudden throb of her heart told her this strange woman's visit was an omen; a sickening shiver came over her, that the bright eyes opposite to her did not fail to see.

"Will you tell me? I must know, even if I ride to the Towers and have it from his own lips."

"I see no reason for your troubling Mr. Haighte. I also know of no reason why I should deny that which is an honor to me, or would be to any woman. Yes, Miss Del Rose, I am betrothed to Bertrand Haighte. I wear this ring, that he gave me; and one month from to-day sees him his bride."

Her eyes were large, haughty in their expression, and dark as a thunder-cloud; and somehow, as Crystel stood watching the stranger dismount, her scarlet shawl flung gracefully over her shoulder, her slight form drawn up in surprise, she associated those wondrous, flashing eyes, as for a moment, they rested full on her, with a lightning-charged storm-cloud, which, at a moment's warning, would spread instant desolation around.

She thought that, then forgot it in her surprise.

Very self-possessed the stranger ascended the steps, and bowed to Crystel.

"This is Miss Roscoe, I think."

"I am Miss Crystel. My sister is not at home."

"Miss Crystel I wish to see. I was not aware there was an elder child."

She paused, and looked keenly at Crystel, who, in her most frigid tones, addressed her:

"I can not imagine what you wish of either Haighte—Miss Roscoe—or myself."

The lady drew near her, and fixed her flashing eyes upon her.

"I am as well aware as yourself that you consider me an intruder: perhaps I am; perhaps you will regard me your best friend one day, strange as my introduction to you is. I came to see you, Miss Crystel, on solemnly important business. May I ask you to invite me within?"

"Explain yourself! Remember Mr.

Haighte is very near and dear to me, and that whatever you say to injure him, hurts me as well. Remember he occupies a position of influence and trust, and is known throughout the State for a noble, upright gentleman. Remember I know him intimately, better than you can."

She had regained her composure, and her brown eyes were steadily regarding the handsome, passionate face before her.

"Better than—"

The stranger checked herself, then began, almost fiercely:

"I tell you he dare not, he can not, he shall not make you his wife! Before high Heaven I swear you shall never stand at the altar as Bertrand Haighte's wife!"

"Such language betrays your purpose, woman. At first I thought you a lady, for your language and gentle demeanor seemed to declare so. I was starfied by your boldness and troubled at your words. But now, Undine Del Rose, whoever or whatever you are, I fear you no longer. Such foolish words belong to but idiots—or jealous women!"

Crystel drew her shawl more closely around her; but the stranger grew more excited at her coolness.

"I—I am an idiot! I jealous of him! Oh, would I might speak the secret that is locked here!"

She struck wildly against her breast.

"I am not anxious to know your secrets. I wish to be excused now!"

Crystel bowed.

"One moment, I beg, while I tell you to prove me—prove me! Go tell your betrothed husband Undine Del Rose was here, and he'll ask who she is! But tell him these three words—whisper them in the ear of the man who, though not bound by word or deed to any living woman but yourself, the man, who, though free as the air he breathes, dare not marry you. Crystel Roscoe, whisper to him, I say, these words—and by the way he hears them, judge for yourself. But, if the world stands, and you live, you'll never see the day that calls you Bertrand Haighte's wife!"

She leaned over, and murmured the fatal words in Crystel's ear. Then, with no further adieu, rode away as she had come.

Crystel watched the flying figure, and noted that it took the direction of The Towers.

She sat down on the rustic settee, her heart fluttering, her thoughts wild and unsettled.

What did it all mean? Who was this mysterious "Undine Del Rose," with her ominous news, her tragic oath? What did she know of Bertrand Haighte?

But, despite her brave putting of the questions to herself, her heart was sinking with fright and nervous alarm; and she grew chillier than the cool evening air alone made her. So she wrapped her shawl more tightly about her, and still sat, waiting and

thinking; the while those three significant words kept ringing in her ears.

Bertrand was bound to no one, yet was not at liberty to marry!

It was strange, at least; and passing bold in this witch-faced, elfin-locked Undine Del Rose, if no more!

Carriage-wheels were approaching, and Crystel arose to greet her sister and father on their return from the city.

"Why, Crystie, you're looking paler than usual, a sort of scared pale. Has anything occurred?"

General Roscoe, a fine, gray-headed, portly old gentleman, drew his youngest son to his side.

She tried to smile.

"A little lonely, papa; that is all. I expected Bertrand, but he did not come."

"And we just passed a lady riding up the avenue to The Towers. A glorious face, dark and witching as an elf's. Helice, my dear, shall I assist you?"

A tall, graceful woman, not unlike Crystel's self, came up the broad marble steps, loaded with wee packages.

"Oh, these tormenting bridal favors, Crystel! Papa fairly scolded me to-day at Stewart's, while I was deciding between white plush or blue velvet buttons for your robe de chambre."

Her merry laugh struck a strange chill to her sister's heart. Already the name of bridal favors sent a sickening shiver over her.

"Then, there were the kids. I selected a dozen boxes, Crystel, and papa whispered to me, did you never wear your hands uncovered after you were to be married?"

Crystel tried to laugh, but her eyes betrayed to the loving sister the fact of some griefs; and, unloading the parcels, she went up to Crystel, with all the decisiveness of her character.

"Look you, Crystel, in my eyes. I see that something has grieved you; you will tell me?"

And then she poured her strange story in Helice's ear.

Helice Roscoe was not a woman who would laugh at such a story; nor would she seek to hide any trouble she herself felt. She was straightforward, honest, brave-hearted; a woman to fight a difficulty rather than go around and avoid it.

So now, when Crystel sat watching and waiting for the words that were coming—Helice was her oracle—Helice was looking down in her sister's eyes, with a sad, pitying light in her own.

"Crystel, child, there must be some sort of a foundation to warrant this stranger's assertions. What it may be, we must find out. Your first duty toward proving her a fraud or a truth is, to faithfully repeat what you have told me to Bertrand. There, he is coming up the front-stairs now."

CHAPTER II.

STRICKEN.

He was a young man, was Bertrand Haighte, with a merry, joyous light in his eyes, and a quick, firm spring in his tread as he walked; a tall, well-built young fellow, with square shoulders, proud head, and graceful bearing.

As he came lightly up the flight of marble steps, Crystel looked down from her window on him with feelings that were strangers to her heart; a vague fear for their future, a distrust of the present, and withal, a yearning tenderness in her soul for him who might never be hers.

These thoughts it was that lent the shadow to her rare brown eyes, and her lover noted it instantly.

"Crystel, darling, what cruel elf has been painting these shades on that sweet face? Can it not be exorcised by my superior power, think you?"

Bertrand lifted her chin, and kissed her ripe, red lips; and she smiled up in his winsome blue eyes; but it was a wan-like smile.

Her lover gazed earnestly at her; then his own face became graver.

"Something is the matter, Crystel. Come, tell me."

With a playful show of authority, he drew her to the sofa, and then sat down himself, holding her cold little hands.

"Come now, pet, and let me hear what occasions this cloud, be it trivial or important. I can promise my sympathy and aid."

How noble he was when he spoke so tenderly, and yet so like a strong, proud man!

"I am sure of your sympathy always, Bertrand, dear, even as I desire you shall ever rest assured of my unchanging love for you, come what will."

Crystel trembled a little as the words left her lips, and she snatched a quick glance at her lover's face, on which was written surprise and bewilderment.

"Come what will! Why, my little girl, what is coming? Any thing to warrant your warning me beforehand?"

Bertrand, I will tell you."

Crystel laid her two hands, clasped, in a dimpled embrace, on young Haighte's knee; she looked full in his wondering, loving eyes; and then told him:

"Bertrand, there came a woman, or I rather should call her a young girl, dark, passionate, splendid, to Edenwilde to-day. She gave her name as Undine Del Rose."

Crystel paused, watching him narrowly, the while, so thankful that he only seemed surprised, not conscious. And yet, did not the young girl say nothing would move him until she mentioned the three test words?

She grew flushed with excitement as she went on.

"This young girl came, purposely to see me, Bertrand, to warn me, dear, against, who do you think?"

She was looking wistfully at him.

"I never could guess, darling, unless it were scape-grace I? Am I right?"

He laughed gayly; Crystel's face grew graver.

"Bertrand, you have spoken in jest the truth that is troubling me. She did tell me you dared not, could not, SHOULD not ever call me your wife."

Crystel's eyes began to moisten, and her lips trembled; it was a relief to see Bertrand spring from the sofa his cheeks flushing, his eyes gleaming in anger. But like a dead weight on her heart lay the fact, she had not yet applied her test.

"It is a disgraceful attempt to black-mail me, my bird, Crystel; but a pitiful, miserable attempt, as this adventure shall prove to her sorrow. Did she say more, Crystel? No wonder you looked gloomy, you poor little darling!"

Her heart throbbed wildly as he put his arms around her waist. Perhaps it might be for the last time; for, when she should have told him the message Undine Del Rose left, and he should, by his agitation, demonstrate his guilt, whatever it was—and guilt it must be that would raise a barrier between them—then, all would be over forever. *Forever!* the thought of the word froze the syllables that she strove to form on her lips. She made a mighty effort; she would know her lover's truth or falsity; she would know the did that should decide her future happiness or despair.

"Bertrand, she had me say to you, *Flo-RIAN STILL LIVES!* *He is still alive!*

Crystel's heart stood still, one awful second of suspense; then, a cold, horrible calm of utter desolation settled over her, for Bertrand sprung from her side as if shot.

"Good Heavens! what demon of perdition dared whisper those accursed words in your ears? Crystel, oh, Crystel, don't look so at me! believe me, believe me, it means nothing to alarm you!"

He lifted her cold hand to his hot, flushed cheek.

"Don't, Bertrand—oh, don't. She said it would prove you're, Bertrand, why did you ever learn me to love you so?"

Her piteous question came feebly to his ears.

"Because I wanted you so, my darling, because you shall be my wife despite this croaking raven who dares shadow you with his vile evilness;" *she said again*.

"But *Florian*—Bertrand, who's *Florian*?"

Crystel's eyes were fixed piercingly at him now; and she saw a hot flush mount to his forehead.

"I can not explain; Crystel, I never dreamed you would bear of this; I never thought to have our blessedness crushed in this foul way." Crystel, my little betrothed bride, only listen, only trust me, only tell me you believe in me, and not in this stranger.

He clasped her tightly in his passionate arms.

"But, you must unravel it; this new, awful mystery, that has broken my heart already. Won't you tell me who this *Florian* is?"

Bertrand shook his head glumly.

"I can not; I dare not." Crystel, there is a secret, a terrible, darkly-terrible secret that never should have come to your ears. But, my darling, I ask you to have faith in me that I am true to you, that I love you. Won't you?"

"But she said you should never marry me!"

His face darkened.

"You said she was dark, elegant?"

Crystel nodded vaguely.

For several minutes Bertrand stood in deepest meditation; gradually he grew pale, and then stern. He took Crystel's nerveless hand in his own, and looked down in her tearful eyes.

"Undine Del Rose was right. Florian does live, and I therefore return you your plighted troth. Crystel Roscoe, God in Heaven alone knows the agony in my heart; He alone knows the tenderness I dare not utter; and I only will unravel this mystery that my lips have solemnly sworn never to reveal." If I have sinned against you, Crystel Roscoe, I never meant it; I alone have sinned, and would that I alone might suffer."

He raised her hand to his lips and bowed reverently before he turned away.

At the door he paused, and looked backword; then sprung vehemently to his brother's side.

"Oh, Crystel, Crystel, my darling, my poor, precious darling! My heart is crushed within me at this sudden news. I never dreamed my past would rise up and blast my future; but, Crystel, before I go, let me swear I never loved her, that you are the only woman who ever heard a love-word from me! Tell me just once, my darling, that you love me!"

She was leaning against the mantel, trembling and white as its marble; her tears were spent, and her voice had a strange calmness; that was far more terrible than the most passionate abandon of grief.

"Bertrand, the cloud is upon me; it will never be lifted; this side eternity's shores; but, Bertrand, dearer than life, stronger than death, is my love for you. Go, now—good-by!"

And thus they parted, they whose very souls had merged into one; and the world went on, and the flowers bloomed, and the sun shone.

And Bertrand Haight and Crystel Roscoe wondered at the inscrutable providence of their Creator.

CHAPTER III.

AT THE TOWERS.

The setting sun was shining redly over the high, gloomy turrets, and flaming against the tiny diamond-paneled casements: the vale below, where Edenwilds lay, was draped in the soft, sweet dusk that follows the sunset, while high up on these peaked hills, the glowing glories were still visible.

The Towers was a grand old place, brown with age of storied fable and eerie renown.

Legends had it that a half-dozen generations before the present heir, when young Lord Oscar Haight fled from his fatherland, because of the human blood that stained his guilty hands, he had bought this grand old place, then lying idly vacant on account of wild rumors afloat that inhabitants of another world had made it their home.

Just suited to his fierce, fearless nature, was this ill-starred Castle Cavnoch to young Lord Oscar, and, in gloomy silence, he and his meek-eyed young wife (whose sad, haunting face was paled long after she was laid to her last slumber) and their three children, took up their abode at "The Towers," as the owner preferred to call it.

At Lord Oscar's death, a paper, closely

written, and imposingly sealed, was left to his oldest son, Egbert, who, after swearing to obey its instructions, was permitted to learn what those instructions were.

All his life was devoted to the duty imposed upon him, while the paper, bearing his added signature, was reserved to his oldest son and heir. Thus had this mysterious document been handed, so ran the legend, through seven successive generations, until, when our story opens, it was in the possession of Bertrand Haight, the present master of The Towers.

Though born of English aristocracy, the young man, as had his father and grandfather, dropped the title to their name, and adopted the prevalent American mode of address and courtesy.

On his twenty-first birthday, a time only three years earlier, Bertrand Haight had read the letter written by the fingers that had so long ago returned to their mother dust.

It is true, there was a certain air of romance lingering about this family relic, not to say an atmosphere of mysterious solemnity; yet, perhaps, because in these unromantic, matter-of-fact later years of ours, when ghosts and goblins, deeds of chivalry, and knights of gallant renown, are but storied fables, Bertrand Haight seemed to care little about the entailed letter that was as much his as The Towers itself. He had sworn to it, to be sure, because he knew he had, to or else lose his expected possession; he had a vague sort of idea that it was only a trifling journey to perform, or a deed to do, that the original Lord Haight had left undone.

So, after reading it, it was with speechless surprise he learned the value of his oath; and for twenty-four hours after the memorable birth-night, young Haight had walked the floor of his library in a restless agony of sorrow, anger and terror.

Thus he grew calmer, as the days wore on; then he became accustomed to thinking of the awful birth-night; and, by the time he had seen pretty Crystel Roscoe, on her return from college, he was prepared to despise the warning of that letter—for its injunctions in the fascinations of his sweetheart's grace and beauty.

And the result—we have seen it.

Bertrand Haight was galloping up the steep bridle-path that led, on one side, to The Towers; after he had left Edenwilds and Crystel.

Those horrible words, so simple to a stranger's ear, were fraught with a mysticism and terror to him, for they were the words written years and years ago by Oscar Haight's hand:

"*FLORIAN STILL LIVES!*"

They were the words told to Crystel, who had whispered them, in an agony of doubt and fear, to him.

No wonder he had paled and flushed with emotion, for those words from the lips of one who never had heard of his ancestor's strange letter—her, who was, above all women, to be mistress of The Towers—at once filled him with keenest agony and greatest alarm. They were the very words that closed the letter that lay, yellow with age, at the old stone Towers; by those words was a Haight to be warned if he forgot his oath, or dared violate it; by them he was to know there was no possible escape to happiness or prosperity, except on the terms laid down and signed by so many of the long-dead Hights.

Of all this was young Bertrand thinking, as he dashed recklessly along, the fresh wind from off the water blowing over his hot, flushed face. At the outer gate, he sprang from his horse, and threw the reins to a waiting groom; entered the grand front entrance, and proceeded to the library.

It was very unlike what one would expect to find at The Towers, after seeing the solemn, silent building from without, where not a sacrilegious hand had touched a stone since the days when the drawbridge and armor-hall had been two of the features of the estate.

A long, light room, looking front on the sloping meadow-land that surrounded the house for several acres; to the side, on the sides of the hills, and the river flowing below, a carpet of light, bright emerald velvet covered the floor; a large oval table, scattered over with books and papers; easy-chairs, upholstered in green leather, and shelves filled with a choice, costly selection of works of every description; poetical historical, political, religious.

Into this apartment (which was often used as reception-room during the summer, while the family—consisting of Bertrand's mother and sisters, with their servants—was at the fashionable watering-place, and who had not yet returned) Bertrand went, agitated and grief-stricken.

At the threshold he paused in amazement; then, recollecting himself, removed his hat courteously and bowed; for it was a lady, leaning carelessly against the open window, that had surprised him.

"I am Bertrand Haight. How can I serve you, madam?"

"Miss, if you please, sir. I am Miss Del Rose, of New York."

She spoke slowly, significantly. The blood receded from his face, and he stared blankly at her.

"I am Bertrand Haight. How can I serve you, madam?"

"Miss, if you please, sir. I am Miss Del Rose."

Her voice was wonderfully liquid and melodious, and he could not avoid noticing the dark, passionate gleam in her eyes.

"I am Bertrand Haight. How can I serve you, madam?"

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She immediately came forward in a peculiarly graceful manner.

"This is Mr. Bertrand Haight, of The Towers!"

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er canoe, and as both parties were near the center of the stream, they came very near each other.

"As sure as I live," exclaimed Ned, in an undertone, "there is that man who headed the party four years ago. I think his name is Belgrave."

"It's the same chap; he's the one, too; that headed an attack on the Hudson Bay men, three years ago. He came near gettin' killed at the time, and he's powerful savage on your father. Don't let him know who you are."

"Hello!" called out the individual referred to, as he signaled to his men to stop rowing. "Is that you, Nick Whiffles?"

"I think it is," was the reply.

"Where bound?"

"Down the river."

"Who've you got with you?"

"A young friend of mine, a sort of visitor in these parts."

"He ain't one of them Hudson Bay men, is he?"

"Does he look like it?"

"Not much; have any of 'em been down in these parts since we cleaned 'em out so beautiful?"

"I haven't seen or heard of any. I don't think they will disturb you any more."

"I'd like to see 'em try it—that's all—I'd give a cargo of peltries if I could lay hands on that Mackintosh that played me such a trick four years ago. I heard he left the country after that."

"So he did."

"It's lucky for him—I've heard tell, too, that he had a son that used to be in these parts. Do you know any thing 'bout it, Ned?"

"His son was in the boat that time you and him came so near gettin' afoul of each other."

"Wal, Nick, I'll give you a hundred dollars if you'll show me where I can lay hands on that Mackintosh or his son. I ain't particular which one it is, for you make one squeal through 'tother just as well as it was himself."

Nick waved him good-by, and the two parties separated.

"Perhaps if I hadn't grown so fast, that savage fellow might have recognized me, and then there's no telling what would have happened," remarked Ned, with a laugh.

"He feels sore over the trick we played him that time. We'll take it easy on the river, so as to be sure of not gettin' in their way. And now, let me sing the paddle awhile," added Nick, reaching forward;

Ned consented, and while the hunter pried the implement, he lay back in the boat, meditating upon his errand, and upon its probabilities of success.

"I can not—can not live without her," he mused, reflecting upon this charming beauty of the woods. "There has never closed a night around me, that I haven't prayed for the safe coming of this day, and now that it is here, I am full of doubt and misgiving about the success of that which I have always looked upon as certain. I can only ask Heaven to be kind to us, as we have always been in the past."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BLOW.

WHEN night had fairly settled upon the river, Nick Whiffles turned the prow of his canoe toward shore, and they landed on the edge of the dense forest, walking inland a rod or so, until they entered a deep gorge.

"I've camped here before," said the old hunter, "and we'll kindle the fire ag'in."

"Are there no Blackfeet near us?"

"There may be in the woods, or on the river; but they can't see this fire, unless one of 'em stubs his toe, and pitches over into it. I find it rather cool to-night, and there ain't much of a moon, so I'll do as I've done before."

In such a place there was little difficulty in gathering sufficient fuel to last the entire night. When this was done, Mackintosh produced a match-safe, and had the fire started in a twinkling. Then they gathered about the crackling blaze, and while they ate their antelope-meat, discussed the all-important errand upon which they had engaged.

The distance was short, and he was not long in reaching the Indian village. He walked boldly among the lodges, and inquired for Woo-wol-na, but to his surprise learned that he was absent. When he asked whether he was hunting or fishing, and when he would return, he found no one able to answer his question.

After some pointless palaver, he made inquiry for Miona, as he said he wished to speak with her before passing through the village.

"The answer to this was the same as the reply to the others. No one could tell where she was!"

Nick was fairly taken aback for the time. He had not counted upon any such rebuff as this, and he did not know what it meant; but that it meant something he had no doubt, and something inimical to her for whom he was searching.

He remained a half-hour or more doing his utmost to learn something, but failing altogether. Finally he concluded to return to Mackintosh with his report, and defer any further attempt to penetrate the mystery until he could see Woo-wol-na; when, unexpectedly, he encountered the chief face to face. Nick at once demanded to see Miona. Woo-wol-na's reply was but a single sentence—but it struck Nick Whiffles like a Minie rifle ball. He turned white, staggered back—then recovered himself, and listened to the old chief's brief but emphatic words of explanation. Without another word the old guide strode away into the woods to tell Ned Mackintosh the fearful tidings!

The two men loitered purposely on the way, so as to make sure of giving the North-West Company abundant time to get out of their reach. This was easily done, and early in the afternoon they caught sight of the returning canoes. Nick paddled up beside them to learn whether there was anything worth knowing. He was told that Woo-wol-na was there, and it was of him that they had purchased the valuable lot of peltries they were carrying back with them.

Several cautiously-put questions failed to discover that they knew any thing about Miona. The Indians had probably taken care to keep her out of the way of all visitors, as it will be remembered that five years before no signs were seen of her or her mother when the Hudson's Bay men made their visit to the same place upon the same errand.

These indications, although very slight, were pronounced favorable by Nick Whiffles, and Ned Mackintosh was not a little encouraged by his statements to that effect.

"You see, if Woo-wol-na is there, I kin go straight into the village without any dodgin' or surcumventin', and I kin find out for myself how the lind lays."

"But he will be there to resist you none the less. You know his son?"

"Yes; he's an ugly young cub; he hates me like pizen, and would rather put a ball through me than not."

The afternoon was about half gone when the two men came opposite a small creek, which put in from the northern side of the river, and which was not the one that drew Ned into captivity. Nick paused opposite it, and remarked:

"You've seen it before, Ned, but notice it now."

"One glance will tell me all I can know about it," he replied, looking in the direction indicated. "Why should I feel any special interest in it?"

"My idea is that after we start, instead of going up the river, we'll go up this creek."

"What is to be gained by that, as we shall have to return, or make an overland journey for a long distance?"

"One distance is that I think I kin throw the varmints of the trail, as they wouldn't be apt to think of our doing such a thing; and then by making a tramp of about thirty miles, I kin strike another stream that will take us into the south branch of the Saskatchewan."

"If that is the case it is the thing we should do by all means," replied his young companion. "I never knew that such a thing were possible. How near are we now to the village?"

"It is something like five miles from here; I'm goin' to take you within a half-mile or thereabouts and then leave you while I go ahead and rakkynoiter."

"At night time?"

"That's the time to go prowlin' round the home of the varmints, fur you musn't forget they've got as sharp eyes as you, and the hardest part of a scout's business isn't to see, but to keep himself from being seen."

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SATURDAY JOURNAL.

Saturday Journal

Published every Tuesday morning at nine o'clock.

NEW YORK, MARCH 18, 1871.

The SATURDAY JOURNAL is sold by all Newsdealers in the United States and in the Canadian Dominion. Subscribers in foreign countries, or those preferring to have the paper sent direct, by mail, from the publication office, are supplied at the following rates:

Terms to Subscribers!

One copy, four months. \$1.00
One year. 3.00
Two copies, " " 5.00

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MESSRS. BEADLE & CO.:—
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The engagement gives me great pleasure, for my relations with your House have always been very pleasant and very satisfactory. Wishing you the success that I am sure your endeavours deserve,

I am, yours respectfully,

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We therefore have the pleasure of announcing that THE POPULAR AUTHOR

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WRITES ONLY FOR THE SATURDAY JOURNAL.

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We may add: the success of Mr. Aiken's stories induced the publishers of the JOURNAL to outbid all competitors and make the author such an offer as would induce him to give up nearly all of his lucrative Star Engagements as an Actor, and devote the best part of his time to his literary labors for us.

And, we may still further add: Mr. Albert W. Aiken has no MSS. (old or new) in the hands of any publishers except those of the SATURDAY JOURNAL.

Foolscap Papers.

The "Oracle" of the Month.

MARCH.

MARCH is the third month this year, and was named after Mars, the god of war. Who Mars was named after I am unable to say, probably after his father, hardly before, or may be after his youngest brother.

March is purely the soldier's month, and is a month of thirty-one days.

During this month there is always something in the wind, which becomes very blustery; and chimneys take wings, and turn into flying bats; and bad signs are in the wind, too—that is, swinging signs which come down on your heads and make you scream "ouch!" and you have more reasons for scratching your heads than you generally have.

March is popularly supposed to be the first month of spring, which it isn't by any means, for if spring came out this month to scatter flowers as she is generally represented, in light clothes, she would catch a cold that she would be obliged to take roasted onions and bathe her feet, and soak her head all summer.

To sit all winter and wait for March seems very long, but March came rather suddenly for me this time, for I had some obligations to meet. (I have met those obligations and they are—renewed.)

By some inexplicable freak of nature you will find yourselves a year older than you were last March—unless you are old maid, and probably no better than you were then. This thought makes me feel as sober as a discomfited Shanghai rooster, eying a hole where a worm went in, and I feel like advertising for some lost opportunities with large rewards to the finder.

"Oh, ever thus from childhood sour."

I was married in March! I had my father's consent and thirty cents. I have never celebrated my golden funeral.

The fourth of July, according to published arrangement, will not occur during this month, as it would be very expensive to make the atmosphere sufficiently and patriotically hot enough for the occasion.

The moon will be the same that shone last month, though it will be a little older, and people who see it first with wishes, will find as many of their wishes come true as those of the last month did.

If the snow still lingers in your latitudes, then it would be a good time now to dig for your plows and harrows, and get ready for your spring work.

It would be a good time now to quit talking about your neighbors, and turn your attention to something more profitable, if not so pleasant.

Marriage knots which may be tied this month, whatever fortune may betide, or whatever paths may be toed, will prove happy ones—if the weather permits, and all parties are satisfied; and old men born this month will live their lives if nothing happens.

Watch the moon, and when it gets in the right quarter, begin to harvest your corns with an apple-peeler.

If any of your neighbors deserve kicking, and you feel yourself capable of the undertaking, it now will be a good time to do it; but if your neighbor wants to kick you it is a good time not to let him do it.

If you hoe your corn and pull out the suckers the first part of this month, and harvest your winter wheat, you will be far ahead of your neighbors, as sure as you are born.

During these nights if you perceive the stars sweeping round the heavens in circumfluent, concentrated and highly-flavored triangular circles—each star seeming a comet, with a tail of tremenous size—and you can't individualize yourself from a loose lamp-post, or can't tell whether you have got the sidewalk down or the sidewalk has got you down, then it would be well for you

to remember that with your winter stimulants you had better begin to taper off with the season.

Saint Patrick Murphy's Day occurs on the 17th of this month. This gentleman snatched all the frogs out of Ireland, except those privately kept in boots—the people had been so constantly frightened by them, especially by the frogs. When he died he bequeathed to them his name, and they have made very good use of it to this day.

On the Ides of March, Julius Caesar died of too much perforation at the toe of Pompey's statue, but I have no Ides on what day of the month it was. It happened while I was so young.

If on the 19th of this month you climb upon the north-east corner of the wood-shed roof and say the alphabet forwards and backwards, and sideways, and then throw yourself off and break your neck, your feelings would be about the same as if it had happened on any other day.

Yours, till the first of April,

WASHINGTON WHITEROX.

TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

ALLOW me to whisper a few words in your ears, and if the mirror is held up too closely to nature, do not lay the blame upon me, but rather upon my subject.

What is the use of using so much deception with the children under your care? If you tell them you are going to whip them for some misdemeanor, why, in conscience' name, don't you do it? It is a strange threat to make, I allow, but when it is made, it should not be broken. When your little folks go astray, and you hold up the threat of a beating for punishment, it is ten chances to one if you do not hear from the child of the period this reply: "You are only making believe; you have said so often before, but you've never done it!"

When you hear a speech like that, you may have a guilty feeling creep over you, and you will wonder if the child is not right, and whether you have not proved yourself a liar. Take my word for it, that child will never trust you again. Don't tell me that this is a trifling subject, and I am only wasting good stationery upon it, because it is not a trifling subject. It should be one of the important questions of the day: Shall we let our young people be brought up to doubt our word, or shall we not? Who can wonder that some of our next generation will grow up liars, when we set them example ourselves?

Mrs. Notoverparticular chimes in here, with the remark that "it is only a horrible bugbear to frightened children with."

Bugbear! I hate them. I have seen too many nervous and easily-frightened young men and women to admire these animals. I have often wondered at their timidity, until I have traced out the causes. It has been brought on by their being bugbearied in their youth. They were told that they mustn't go down-stairs after dark, because a ghost always was walking about there. What busin' ss has a ghost in a cellar at all?

Another bugbear came in the shape of a man who ever hid behind a cloak which hung on the wall, and who was sure to come down and carry them off, if they didn't keep still in the evening, and let grandma snooze. Their mothers used to tell them they must close up their eyes, and go to sleep just as soon as they got into bed, or the black man, who always smothered wakeful children, would be after them. I tell you, these frightening bugbears leave a deep impression on the mind, especially of the young.

Read a ghost-story yourself—something about a pair of skeleton hands drawing the curtains of the bed at midnight; will you not hate to have bedtime draw near, and when you have retired to rest, will not that story haunt you, and, as you cover up your head in the bedclothes, wonder you almost pray for morning to come? I'll warrant you'll keep the light burning throughout the night. If these things affect *you* so deeply, what must be the effect upon the young?

My advice is not to frighten children at all. Don't sink your dignity so low as to make them mind by using falsehoods. It does you no good, and entails harm upon them in the future. I had my share of bugbears when I wore pantaloons, and there's a dark place under the stairs, at the old mansion, which, even now, fills me with a feeling as though some one was "walking over my grave," to pass it by. That dark place once held the arm of a murdered woman, who clutched little girls who cried to sit up. This story was told me by my nursery-maid, who wanted to have the nursery to herself, to receive her "feller."

I used to love to ride on a hay-cart when I was a school-girl, and heartily did I enjoy it, until I caught the driver kissing one of the girls. There was no more hay-cart for me. The driver declared to me there was a man secreted in the hay, armed with a pitchfork, ready to impale all eavesdropping girls. I have hated hay-carts ever since, but I've got over my dislike to drivers. Now, what do you say to that, Mrs. N.?

We hear long discourses about Christianity, but do we stop to carry it into our households and remind us that it is not very Christian-like to whip our young people for fibbing, when we are the ones most instrumental in their so doing? We can get along with them without lying, and it is not pleasant.

Grandma Lawless, after a hard day's work, solemnly declared to me that she was dead with fatigue. So much faith had I in the dear old soul's word, that I asked her if she wanted to be buried in a casket or a coffin, and whether she desired us to wear whole mourning or only half. I even went so far as to tell her that I should be glad to cut up her old dress for dolls' gowns, and that I should get a man to preach her funeral sermon who wouldn't speak through his nose. Grandma laughed heartily, and, placing her hand on my youthful head, exclaimed—"Eve, you have taught me a lesson, never to speak an untruth, even in a jesting way."

Grandma doesn't fib now. Do you not see the moral to this little incident, and also its application?

EVE LAWLESS.

MINSTREL OR MONK.

LET me write the songs of a nation and I care not who makes its laws," once said a popular author. And he was right. The memory of the poet will long outlive that of the lawgiver.

It has been the fashion from the day of Adam downward for the so-called, "wise men," to decry the taste of the people.

The monk of ancient days despised the

minstrel who tuned his lyre and told of brave men and tender women—of daring deeds and passionate love.

The minstrel sung for the people. His theme was dear to their hearts. They opened their doors wide and hailed his approach with joy.

The monk bent over his illumined manuscript and dreamed of other ages. He toiled not for the present but lived in the past.

Our own time this monk has doffed his cowled robe, but still, in a sober garb—black broadcloth—conducts a "first-class magazine." He is the exponent of High Art. His ponderous pen makes and unmakes authors, painters, artists of all descriptions. He frowns; they tremble. He tells the world what is fit to be read and to see. But, does the world obey? Not in the least. It still clings fondly to the minstrel, who now, in the form of novelist, writing serials for the weekly newspapers, tells the same old, old love story that he sang to the music of the harp in the "dark ages."

The High Art, kid-gloved magazine, sneers at the popular author—declares that the love stories are silly, and laments the want of taste so apparent in the minds of the people. And when it does unbend so far as to publish a serial, the style of it is wonderful. No passionate or tender love scenes—those are "common;" the hero and heroine declare their passion by the rule of three, and discover that they love each other while puzzling over a difficult problem in mathematics. The characters are all robust, the grammar is pure, their action perfect. No common people are allowed to figure in the high-art novel. The brave engineer who went undaunted to his death, with his hand on the throttle of his engine—who knowingly gave his own life that others might live; the draw-bridge tender—the poor unlettered Irishman, who lets his only boy strangling in the water and ran to hoist the red signal of danger that warned the approaching train of the open drawbridge and thus saved a hundred lives at the expense of his son's; and the erring woman, the outcast and the wanderer, sinking in the muddy tide of the Mississippi, with the glare of the burning steamer lighting up her face, who held up her babe to the rescuing boat and said, "Save my child first!"—all these could never appear in the pages of this *high-toned* author.

These acts of heroism, that stir the blood, thrill the heart and make one think better of his fellow-creatures, are too common—too "sensational." They would defile the high-art page.

The "monk's" magazine circulates from ten to sixty thousand per month. The "minstrel's" newspaper from thirty to three hundred thousand per week.

Which, then, is the teacher of the people?

Dickens, Scott, Bulwer, Dumas, Cooper, Hawthorne and Mayne Reid, the master-writers, wrote of human nature as they found it in the world. Their characters, as often in rags as in broadcloth; their scenes in the low haunts of crime as well as in the marble palace of society.

The people knew the pictures they drew were true ones; hence their popularity.

At present, as in the past, the monk is far more popular than the minstrel.

ALBERT W. AIKEN, now one of the most popular of living writers, writes only for the "Saturday Journal." All attempts to make the public think that he writes for other journals are mere "tricks of the trade" to deceive the unwary. Be not deceived!

SMITHERS IS EXCITED.

I AM pleased to learn that the SATURDAY JOURNAL can appreciate talent, if it only comes from the brains of an humble showman. The sweet serenity of our happy fire-side has been invaded upon. The grief of Mrs. Smithers is excessive, and in her anguish she has used up two pocket-handkerchiefs to rub the pearly moisture from her eyes—in other words, tears. Mrs. Smithers is not becoming in tears, and besides it is ruining to her handkerchiefs.

I have told her so, and painful as it is to let the world know of the disagreements of married life, and drag them before the gaze of the public, I must confess that Mrs. Smithers always will shed tears. She ever peels onions previous to going before the audience to sing "Why do I weep for thee?" Nobody seems to know why she does or cares to be informed on the subject.

She was singing that somewhat affectionate and affecting air one night, and had propounded the conundrum, when a wretch, wearing the garb of a man, exclaimed that it was doubtless because I had beaten her, for imbibing too much of a non-temperance beverage. Mrs. Smithers so far forgot herself as a woman, and a showman's wife, as to address the audience in a proumissive manner, and to say, "As there is country cloths, who can not appreciate my vocalistic efforts, I will endeavor to bring my songs down to the circumference of those who know not what is what."

She struck a bee-line off into "I can not sing the old songs" when the wretch previously mentioned before replied, "Then, what in thunder makes you do it?" As I can not bear that the partner of my life, my bosom and my show, should hear swearing, I led her from the hearing of it.

But I am dregging. Miss Smithers, who is my daughter, moans by herself, as she very ungrammatically murmurs, "I haven't got but one handkerchief, and I ain't going to muss it up for nobody, not as I know how."

And why this sadness, why this Egyptian gloom, that lowers around our hemisphere? as I remark while exhibiting the Tower of Babel—which does duty for Bunker Hill Monument as well. The boy so loved and revered by us all, Deblity Joseph Smithers, is—well, where is he? We miss his genial face, his happy appetite, his winning, grinning smile, and we also miss the cash-box he took with him. How could he depart from the paths of uprightness and honesty so far as to commit larceny, and bring the gray hairs in my wig in sorrow to the graveyard? I have since discovered that Mrs. Smithers spilled some flour on that wig, before I arose from my virtuous iron bedstead. You see, I desire to have the truth spoken at all times, even though I do lead the people into an error, when I tell them the scene representing Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, bargaining with Noah for a cheap passage in his Ark, was painted on the spot; it is only a harmless joke, and the "Surinder of Cornwallis" must be used in some

manner. When I first learned that Deblity Joseph had fled, I felt as though something had disagreed with me, and when I learned that he had taken the cash-box with him, my grief was excessive and knew no bounds. Yet, though my avariciousness would not allow of my bounding, still I jumped up and down from sorrow.

To the woman who calleth me husband, I rushed, and exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "My idol is shattered, my bright star hath fled!" She asked me if I was measuring myself for a lunatic asylum, or if I had thoughts of leaving her a widow, when black bombazine was so high? She remarked that if I had shattered any of the wax-figures, she should never speak to me again. I wished I had given the whacks to the wax-figures much as I love to hear the gentle wind-sigh accents of her who loves me for myself alone, and the money our unparalleled show makes for us. I explained matters. Mrs. S. commenced quoting poetry in a most original style:

"I am all alone in my chamber now,
And my heart is sad and rent,
For my hands and my eyes are full as I think
Of my Deblity Joseph, who went."

Then she peeled a few onions, wept some spasmodic tears, and eat them. I have reference to the onions.

I took my pipe in my mouth, allowed the wife of my bosom to pull off my boots, while our female offspring undid her back hair. We made a lovely domestic group. Should any photographer desire our services, we are ready to repeat the group, provided he will publish the advertisement of our show on the back of each card. We

SATURDAY JOURNAL.

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A VOICE FROM THE SEA.

BY H. A. FRANCIS.

Roll!—billows, roll!
I never shall tire of thee;
For oftentimes I seem to hear
A voice from the sea.

At break or close of day,
Where'er I chance to be,
Still to my ear, distinctly comes
A voice from the sea.

It whispers words of hope:—
Sweet words they are to me:—
It speaks of brighter, happier lands,
That voice from the sea.

And how can I be sad
When feeling that 'tis he,
Who speaks of those bright, happy lands,
His voice from the sea.

Then roll! billows, roll!
And I will marry him,
While waiting here, my summons from
His voice from the sea.

Bianca; OR, THE SCAR ON MY NECK.

BY MARY REED CLOWELL.

She was perfectly lovely that night, in her black velvet dress, and its Honiton over-dress that rivalled vainly the darkness of her bright eyes and ivory-shining hair. At her throat she wore the Carruthers solitaire; and that was her only ornament, unless I except the trailing, drooping spray of dusky pink roses in her hair.

I was dressed in a white pique—I usually wear white, summer and winter—and I know there was a rising anger in my heart as I looked at her, as she adjusted a glove-button. Why should I not feel jealously angry?

I was a Carruthers as well as she; only—ah! that horrid "only"—she was the rich, courted Bianca Carruthers, only child and heiress of her father; while I—I was "nobody" but Fay—pretty, silly, useful little Fay, you know; Fred's daughter and that low French girl's. Poor, dear Fred, to think he threw himself away so!

That was the way they—they mean my father's folks—generally introduced me. At first I was indignant that my dear, dead mother, who loved my father so, and who was so patient and angel-like, was considered "low," because she was a poor girl. Then I had learned to wisely refrain from my outbursts; and by the time I had been at Carruthers Court six years, and had been taught by experience what that red gleam in my cousin Bianca's black eyes meant—and it shone never so luridly as when I attempted to protest against their inhuman way of speaking of my mother—I held my tongue; and then they said: "How docile Fay has become!" But I hated them all; from the kingly old gentleman who was my grandfather as well as Bianca's, down to beautiful Bianca herself. I think they all reciprocated this natural-born antagonism; for they let me alone, every one of them, and I went about the old, castle-like mansion with a fierce pride that I possessed equal shares in it; with a savage determination to stay there so long as I chose, despite their coldness, their magnificent contempt of me.

For was I not a Carruthers? Bianca went out a great deal, and her lovers numbered a score at least; while I, utterly ignored by the "set," the Carruthers graced, used to smile grimly after they had all gone to some aristocratic reception, and then console myself with my books.

"Fay," Bianca said, one miserably sleepy morning, paying me the unwonted compliment of a visit, "the Emersons receive tonight, and my violet moire needs attention. Could you just arrange the satin a trifle?"

So I laid aside my work, and followed her to her dressing-room.

"Annie is sick with one of her headaches, or I'd not annoy you. Then, you know your taste is so exquisite, and Chauncey Delorme will be there. You know what a critic he is."

No, I didn't know any thing about it, and I told her so; then asked her if she would have the tulle and satin arranged berthe or Pompadour.

I felt the vexatious frown I would not look up to see; then directly she spoke:

"Fay Carruthers, you know I love him, and am going to win him."

I looked up then; and I don't think she particularly enjoyed my rejoinder.

"Yes, I think I remember his name now. The gentleman your party followed all last summer from Switzerland to Paris. He must be a paragon."

She flushed a little, but it was in anger.

"Thank you. He is a paragon."

"I hate paragons."

That was all either of us said about it; I finished the task, received a most chilling "thank you," returned an equally heartless "not at all," and went back to my room.

It stormed fearfully that night; great gusts of rain-fraught wind went dashing madly by the great old house; but she went to the Emersons, clad in her royal robes, to see him, Chauncey De Lorme—she and all the family—leaving the Court to me and the servants.

After the carriage had gone, I went down to the library, a grand old room, my favorite retreat, anticipating a delightful hour among the red-and-gold covers. I had kept on my white pique, but had unloosened my hair—it was my only pride, so like my mother's in its thick lengthiness, its waving, lustrous goldeness; so, curled up in an arm-chair—scarlet velvet it was—with my hair nestling lovingly around me, and the gas turned on to a delightful radiance, I took down a favorite author, and began to read. I have not the slightest idea how long it was, but I must have fallen asleep; for, of sudden, I opened my eyes, and in a frightened sort of surprise, I remember, met the gaze, half amused, half deprecating, of a stranger.

"Pardon me, please; I just this moment came in, expecting to find Miss Carruthers. I am Chauncey De Lorme."

He bowed with such courtly grace, and so winning a smile, that I ceased to wonder why Bianca was so in love with her cavalier.

"My cousin has gone, an hour since, perhaps, Mr. De Lorme."

"Then you, too, are a Miss Carruthers, I judge?"

"Yes, I am Fay."

"Fay!" he repeated; and I never knew till then how liquidly-melodious my name was; and a little flush of pleasure rose to my cheeks.

"I am very much gratified to make your acquaintance, Miss Fay. May I hope it

will be continued as delightfully as it has begun?"

"I certainly have not the slightest objection to it, sir. I have heard so much of you!"

"I could have bitten my tongue off for my thoughtlessness. I saw a comical little smile hover a second on his beautiful mouth.

"From Miss Bianca, I think I may venture to say. She and I are great friends, I am proud to assure you."

Then I began to hate him; the idea of him and her being friends! Something in the thought made me shiver.

"I will be late at the Emersons, I fear, but 'Fays' don't often beguile us poor mortals nowadays. Good-night!"

He was off, as suddenly and mysteriously as he had come.

Later, Bianca returned, flushed with a glorious triumph; and I wondered—well, what did I wonder?

The very next day, when Chauncey De Lorme came, he sent cards to both Bianca and myself. Like a tigress, she caught my arm.

"Girl do you know him?"

I was terrified at the lurid glow in her eyes, but I was not to be silenced.

"I know him."

"Well?"

"What is it you wish to ask me? if I am in love? because if you do, I might say I had as good a right to win him as yourself."

She clenched her fists and shook them in my face.

"Don't you dare! He is the first, the only man I ever loved; beware how you cross my track, you vile French creature, or you shall repent in ashes every day of your life!"

I felt her hot breath on my face, caught the red gleam of her eyes, and then she was gone.

I changed my collar, twisted a geranium in my hair, and was down in the reception-room before Bianca, wondering what she would say.

All smiles she entered, with a mockingly reproving glance at me.

"Fay, you sprite! always in advance of slow, sober me!"

Her audacity struck me speechless for a second, then I grew bold.

"Always in advance, my dearest Bianca, and always intend to be."

If she detected the hidden meaning, she made no sign.

sunshine, or among the blooming flowers; while I, poor, unworthy I, have had given to me the best jewel awarded to woman, the priceless gem of a fond, loving, appreciating heart.

Soon to Commence!

The great story of the Wilderness, in the days when the remorsers Shawnee—the Tigers of the Woods—made Kentucky "a dark and bloody ground," is soon to commence in these columns. It is by a writer of wide-spread reputation, and a work of more than ordinary interest. Look out for

THE AVENGING ANGELS!

The White Witch: OR, THE LEAGUE OF THREE. A STRANGE STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "HEART OF FIRE," "WOLF DEMON,"
"SCARLET HAND," "ACE OF SPADES," ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE NET.

"WELL, I'm blest!" muttered Pipgan, as he watched the carriage drive off. "If this 're ain't miraculous—wonderful for to be hold! Why, these familiar faces makes me think that I'm across the water. Shall I follow them?"

A moment he pondered on the question. "What's the use?" he said, reflectively. "The girl, evidently, lives in that hotel, so I know where to find her if I want her; and as for the dashy nob with the golden hair—blessed if that hair-dyeing ain't a brilliant idea!—I know where to find him if I wants him. But, do I want him? That's a question that I can't answer just now. I shall have to use the ocean cable to find out. I might as well inquire a little as to who this girl is—what tack she's sailing on, as a nautical man would say. Just to think of my coming to this blarsted country, you know, to enjoy myself a bit, and getting right into business."

Then Mr. Pipgan missed his tooth-pick.

"Another quill gone!" he muttered, as his eyes found it on the pavement. "That's the second one that this 're party has cost me."

He supplied himself with a fresh tooth-

True, there was nothing absolutely wrong in Montgomery's situation, for a third party—O'Connel—was present. But as the bard of Avon wrote, "frites light as air are to the jealous, confirmations strong as proofs of holly writ."

The subtle mind of the chief of the League of Three had kindled the spark, the other members of the brotherhood must fan it into a blaze.

Seeing Frances at the window about spoilt all the pleasure of the drive for Montgomery. Yet there were moments when, amid the winding roads of the Park, secluded as it were from the world, in gazing into the dark, lustrous eyes of the beautiful stranger—eyes which seemed to beam with a softer light when they looked upon him—he forgot the memory of Frances Chauncy.

The drive over, the party returned to the hotel.

Montgomery and O'Connel made their adieus to the countess. Politely, she pressed them to call again.

Montgomery fancied that her request was addressed more to him than to his companion, and that her eyes said more than her words.

But, as a rule, nearly all young men are vain in the presence of a pretty woman; perhaps Montgomery was not an exception to the rule.

"By the way," said O'Connel, as they descended to the street, "did you notice that Miss Chauncy didn't look as amiable as usual to-day?"

"Do you think so?" Montgomery answered, evading the question.

"Well, yes. It struck me that way. I only gave her a casual glance, though, as we passed; perhaps I am wrong."

"I never saw her out of sorts," Montgomery said. "I don't believe that she could get angry if she tried to; she is very amiable."

He was vainly fighting against what his heart told him was truth. He was sure that Frances was displeased.

"What does 'Iago' in the play say about 'belles in their parlors, devils in their kitchens,'" said O'Connel, shrewdly.

"That's nonsense, as far as Miss Chauncy is concerned," said Montgomery. "A better man never lived."

"Yes; I believe some wise man once said that all women are angels until they were proved to be—the contrary," O'Connel replied, with latent sarcasm in his tone.

CHAPTER XIV.

True! I couldn't have wished for any thing better. She saw her lover drive past the house with a beautiful girl; one fully as pretty as she is. She is not the woman that I take her for if she is not jealous. And if she is jealous, she herself shall rend the bond that binds Montgomery to her. Of course he can easily explain the circumstance; but what woman ever listened to reason—especially if she was jealous?"

O'Connel paced onward with hasty steps. Ideas were thronging, quickly, upon his brain, and his stride took the cue from their speed.

"I must find either Stoll or Tulip," he muttered. "One of them—better Stoll, for I doubt if Tulip will be in the mood after his repulse—must call upon Miss Chauncy this afternoon; get there before Montgomery, and in the course of a casual conversation contrive to tell her that it is all over town that Montgomery is desperately in love with this beautiful French girl. 'Aha!' and O'Connel laughed again. "Leone plays her part to perfection." Then his mind came back to his scheme. "With the information of her lover's madness after another woman in her mind, when Montgomery calls his reception will be any thing but a gracious one. I think I know his nature pretty well. His pride is the strong point in his character. Let Frances offend that pride—which she will be pretty apt to do, for women are very free with their words when anger rules them—and every thing will be at an end between them. If she casts him off—wounds his pride—he will call her false and fickle—learn to despise her. Love will be replaced by contempt. A man can not love a woman that he thinks is unworthy of him. Then, desperate—for all men are desperate to a certain extent when disappointed in these matters of the heart—where will he seek consolation?"

O'Connel laughed, as he put the question to himself.

"Where would I seek it, or any other reasonable man? Why, in the love of the woman who does look kindly on my passion. Will he not do the same? He is only human with all his strength of mind. I've noticed as a fact in this world, the nobler the man—the greater his mental power and talent—the bigger fool he is where a woman is concerned."

"All great men have a great deal of the woman in their natures. Once he seeks her love, he falls like a blind fool into our power. The snare is carefully laid. He can not fail to be caught by it; and, once in the net, I'll warrant that he'll not break through the meshes."

O'Connel's lips were compressed firmly and the evil light was lurking in his eyes, as he thought of the triumph in the future.

"Even this mysterious White Witch, who seems by accident—for it can not be aught else—to have hit upon my very plans, can not save him. I'd give a trifte to know who the White Witch is! but—bah! it was only a masquerading joke; by chance she hit on something that seemed like my ideas."

Then O'Connel saw Tulip and Stoll standing in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THREE IN COUNCIL.

TULIP and Stoll greeted the chief of the League with a look of inquiry as he joined them.

"All goes on well," said O'Connel, in reply to the look.

"You have introduced him to the lady?"

Tulip asked.

"More than that. He has not only made the acquaintance of the fair countess, but he has rode about the Park with her side for over an hour," O'Connel replied, with a look of triumph.

"You have pushed matters, then," Stoll said with a coarse laugh.

"The game we are playing is a difficult one; we can neither afford to lose a trick nor to hesitate in our play," replied O'Connel, gravely.

"So far you have succeeded," Tulip said.

"Yes, beyond my hopes. Montgomery has not only made the acquaintance of the siren who is to lure him to ruin, but he has been fascinated by her."

"By Jove!" cried Stoll, exultingly, "the beginning is beautiful."

Tulip showed no signs of joy upon his thoughtful face. Farther-sighted than his companion, he knew, full well, that the first trick does not decide the fate of the game.

"He has been attracted by the beauty of our siren," Tulip said.

"Yes; but more, I think, by her conversation and manners even than her beauty. Our siren is not only a beautiful woman, but an accomplished lady. There is a nameless grace about her—a subtle charm—that affects even me, sometimes, and yet I have known her many years," replied O'Connel.

"She has charmed—fascinated him?"

"Yes," and he proceeded to relate the events of their ride and to explain his further plans for alienating Montgomery and Frances Chauncy.

The other two listened, eagerly.

"Don't understand what?"
"Why, how is it that she is willing to act as our agent in this matter?"

"Ah, that's a secret," returned O'Connell, evasively. "The girl is not rich, of course; for it is the money of the League of Three that supports her in the style in which she lives. But she does not do my will for money."

"What for, then?"

"My dear Stoll, you do ask terrible questions; and the worst of it is, that I can't answer them," said O'Connell, pleasantly.

"You can if you want to?" Stoll returned, bluntly.

"Exactly! but it happens that I don't want to," and O'Connell laughed in the face of the broker.

"Well, she is a deuced pretty woman. I suppose, as she is living on our money, it won't be any harm if I take a fancy to make love to her?" Stoll said, coarsely.

"Yes, there is one objection," O'Connell replied, quietly.

"And that is?"

"Myself."

"Eh?" and Stoll looked astonished.

"This lady that we speak of, to please me, has descended to act the part of a lure, to entrap the bird whose wings we wish to clip; yet, as surely as I stand here, so surely would I kill the man—say one alone—who should dare to speak of love to her!" The tone of O'Connell was icy cold, no trace of passion, and yet both his hearers felt sure that he would keep his word, should the event happen that he alluded to.

"I suppose the one man is yourself, eh?" Stoll said, after a few moments' silence.

"Perhaps so," replied O'Connell, carelessly.

"We had better make an early call on Miss Chauncy, so as to get there before Montgomery," said Tulip, changing the subject. "If once he has a chance to explain his reason for riding with this stranger, we will have a difficult task in inflaming the girl against him."

"That is a good thought!" exclaimed O'Connell, quickly.

"By the way, we got a little information out of Montgomery this morning that may prove useful to us," said Stoll.

"What is it?" asked O'Connell.

"Since the abrupt departure of Catlin, his banker, he has lost faith in the Wall street gentlemen, and hereafter, he says, he is going to keep his bonds and like valuable in a safe in his own room."

"That is information, indeed!" cried O'Connell, quickly. "A safe in his own room, eh?" and for a moment O'Connell was silent, apparently in deep thought. "If he should be robbed some fine night it would be a heavy blow," he said, breaking the silence.

The three looked at each other.

"Can it be done?" asked Stoll, mysteriously.

"When three determined men, with plenty of money, set about accomplishing any possible object, the chances are ten to one that they will succeed," replied O'Connell, ambiguously.

"He must have quite a sum in Government bonds; or, at least, I know that he did have," said Tulip.

"I'll think it over. First, we'll detach him from this avenue belle; then, our next blow will be at his money," O'Connell said, quietly.

"We'll call upon Miss Chauncy about two," Tulip said.

"You will call, then?" O'Connell asked, with a side glance into the face of the young man.

"Yes," Tulip replied, and as he spoke, he detected the look of the other, and a slight flush tinged his cheeks.

"I'll meet you here, then, about three," O'Connell said, and then they parted.

"Poor, silly moth!" muttered O'Connell, as he watched the two proceed up the street; "he flutters around the garish flame, hoping against hope. Ah, Tulip Roche, Frances Chauncy is not for you! Another has marked her for his own, and the chances are that he will win her." Then, for a moment, he was silent. Busy thoughts were in his brain.

"By Jove!" he cried, suddenly, "in all my desperate ventures never have I had such smooth sailing as this has been. If my course lies through the reefs and amid the tempest, it is, seemingly, far in the future."

Leaving O'Connell to his meditations, we will follow Tulip and Stoll.

"What a deuced mystery he makes about this girl," grumbled Stoll.

"I saw by his eye, the moment you spoke, that you had touched upon a delicate subject," said Tulip.

"What do you suppose is the nature of the tie between them?" asked Frances, carelessly.

"He is either her lover or she is his wife," replied Tulip. "I guessed one of the two the moment I saw the girl."

"And that is the reason that she is willing to perform this service for him?"

"Yes."

"But, why does he make a mystery out of it?"

"That's hard to say," replied Tulip, thoughtfully. "This O'Connell is a strange fellow; not an ordinary man in any sense of the word. He, himself, is a mystery. We have known him some time, Herman, yet what do we know of him?"

"Nothing!" answered Stoll, after thinking for a moment.

"Exactly; in saying 'nothing' you have only spoken the truth. We know that his name is Lionel O'Connell, or, at least, that he says it is. We have no proof that it is his name. And his occupation, a writer for the press; yet he is not known to be actually connected with any newspaper. Then, again, he always has plenty of money!"

"And I never saw one of these newspaper fellows that ever had any money, before," interrupted Stoll, in his coarse way.

"Well, I don't suppose that their salaries are very large, save in some few exceptional cases," Tulip said; "but this man, apparently, has plenty of money, and spends it as freely as if he were worth a million."

"I don't understand it!" Stoll exclaimed, with a shake of the head.

"Nor I," Tulip said. "This O'Connell has a wonderful way of getting his friends to tell him all about themselves, and yet he keeps his own history concealed. You never hear him speak of what he has done in the past."

"Never!"

"He's a strange fellow."

"A smart one, though. That idea of driving the carriage, with Montgomery and this French girl in it, past her house was a capital one."

"Yes, and it now rests with us to clench the nail that he has driven," Tulip said.

"Well, what do you think about it?" asked Stoll, suddenly.

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"Well, what do you think about it?" asked Stoll, suddenly.

"Never!"

"He's a strange fellow."

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SATURDAY JOURNAL.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

Hawk Heron.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE PLAINS.

BY GEO. L. AIKEN.

BEFORE the building of the Union Pacific Railroad I had occasion to cross the plains. My companion and guide upon the journey, was a well-known "mountain man" who was called by the peculiar, alliterative name of "Hawk Heron." He had the reputation of being a good hunter and a most daring and determined Indian-fighter. He was rather slight in figure, but wiry, and very active in all his movements; and moreover he was what a woman would have called a singularly handsome man. That is to say, there was peculiarity in his appearance rendering it at once prepossessing and picturesque. His hunter's garb, his bronzed complexion, and full-bearded face, added to this effect.

His manner was abrupt and his speech conduced to as few words as possible. Taciturnity appeared to be his prevailing characteristic, and I was told, before I left Fort Badger, that I would not find Hawk Heron a very sociable companion upon the road. It was evident that he bore among the mountain men the reputation of being odd. This made no difference to me, however; my business required that I should push on at once to the Missouri, and so long as he was a trusty guide he might suit his own humor in regard to conversation upon the way.

The solitude of those vast plains is apt to render human nature more congenial, and by our lonely camp-fires at night the guide thawed considerably and I found, to my astonishment, that he was a man well educated, familiar with the amenities of social life, and fitted to grace a prominent position in society.

"What in the world could ever have induced you to adopt the wild life of a hunter, Heron?" I exclaimed, involuntarily.

He smiled bitterly. "I lay by the fire, and the flames lit up his features distinctly. "A woman!" he answered, with a forced laugh. "You might have guessed that."

This then was a case of blighted affection.

I had hardly deemed him the kind of man that would throw himself away for a woman, and I told him so.

"I dare say it looks foolish to you," he replied. "And yet why should it? Women control our destinies—say what we will—and a man in love, is a man out of his senses."

"In some respects," I responded; qualifying his remark, which I thought rather too sweeping.

"Let me tell you my story," he cried, suddenly. "I will do so, even at the risk of being thought a fool for my pains."

I was rather pleased at the idea, for I had conceived quite a friendship for this eccentric man during the few days we had been thrown into each other's company.

"Do so, by all means," I rejoined; "and be assured of finding a patient listener. I am anxious to hear something of the history of so distinguished a hunter as Hawk Heron."

"Pshaw!" he replied, impatiently. "My name is not Hawk—my name is Edward Heron."

"Where did the Hawk come from then?"

"Oh! from some of the Indians—I led several attacks upon them, pouncing down upon them like a hawk, as my comrades said, and from that circumstance came the name. One always gets some distinguishing name among the mountain men. The Indians call me 'Hawk' altogether."

"The name seems very applicable," I returned, glancing at his slight figure, sharp-cut features, and restless, bright eyes.

"Oh, yes," he answered, carelessly. "You will scarcely credit it, perhaps, but a dozen of these red warriors of the plains, Sioux or Cheyennes, will fly like frightened sheep at the snort of my mustang, (who seems to hate an Indian instinctively,) never waiting for the pounce of the 'Hawk.' I travel these plains with impunity, protected by my reputation as an Indian-fighter—reputation acquired by the many reckless attempts which I have made to throw away my life. That life has been strangely preserved—strangely that my comrades, in these wild fights with the Indians, firmly believe that I bear a charmed life, and that neither knife, arrow, or bullet can deprive me of it."

"Do you share in this superstition?" I asked, curiously.

"Of course not," he answered. "My very recklessness of danger has proved my safeguard. I could not throw away the life I was so weary of, although I tried hard enough. You look at me in wonder; you can not understand, probably, that a man this side of thirty should grow tired of his life."

I confessed that I could not.

"The solution is very simple," he continued. "I will tell you what drove me to this wilderness, and the wild life I am leading. Five years ago I held a lucrative position in a mercantile house in New York city. One day, having occasion to cross the river on some business in Brooklyn, the ferry-boat came in contact with a sailing-boat upon the river, through the mismanagement of the party in the boat, which consisted of two gentlemen and a lady. The sailing-boat was upset; I saw the lady struggling in the water, her male companions being unable to render her any assistance, and, on the spur of the moment, I threw off my coat and plunged into the river."

"It was nobly done!" I cried.

"So everybody said at the time," he continued, carelessly. "As a swimmer, I was very proficient, and I had little difficulty in keeping the lady's head above the water until we were drawn on board the ferry-boat; and a very pretty head it was, as I could see even in the excitement and peril of our position."

Her male friends had been rescued by means of ropes thrown to them, and we stood, dripping the water from our deluged garments, surrounded by an admiring and curious throng of spectators on the deck of the boat. I then learned that the lady I had saved, (for they would insist upon it that I had saved her life,) was Alice Layden, the daughter of a prominent and wealthy resident of New York; and that her male companions were her father, and her cousin, Mr. Oliver Vander, a scion of an old Knickerbocker family.

"Mr. John Layden was profuse in his expressions of gratitude, and laid the blame of the accident upon Oliver Vander, imputing it entirely to his carelessness. Vander treated me very superciliously, but I was more than repaid for what I had done by the

sweet smile and murmured thanks of the pretty Alice, and I cared little for the studied insolence of Mr. Vander. I did not like him from the first. I deemed him filled with an overweening conceit of his own importance. First impressions, I know, are not always to be depended upon; but I never found occasion afterward to change those I formed concerning Oliver Vander at that moment.

The accident led to my becoming a guest at Mr. Layden's house—an elegant mansion on Murray Hill. Of course I fell desperately in love with Alice, that was a natural sequence; and though I knew I had a rival in Oliver Vander, the discovery of that circumstance occasioned me but little uneasiness, as I was pretty sure that Alice did not love him, and I thought she did love me. Inspired by this hope, I avowed my passion to her, and was blessed with a favorable answer; but there was an obstacle in the way, and that obstacle was this insufferable coxcomb of a cousin. The pet scheme of Mr. Layden's life was to unite the two branches of the family by the marriage of Alice and Oliver, and thus secure the Vander property to his grandchildren—consolidating once again the two estates. He had set his heart upon a rich son-in-law, and I was a poor man, though I could boast as proud a name as his own; but money is of more account than blood in this world. I had little hope of gaining his consent.

Alice, however, was more hopeful. She was her father's darling—all he had in life to love, his wife having died many years before, and she thought that her happiness would be at the first consideration.

I went to him in an honorable manner and made known my pretensions to his daughter's hand. To my great surprise he received my proposition in a very affable manner, told me that he had hoped that Alice would, eventually, marry Oliver Vander, but if I had secured her preference he would offer no objection, but that Alice could choose for herself.

"I carried these glad tidings to Alice, and from that moment we were affianced. It is not to be supposed that Oliver Vander would submit with a good grace to my successful rivalry. Rich as he was already, still he coveted the additional wealth that a marriage with his cousin would bring him. He was continually throwing out slurs about my poverty before Alice, and stigmatizing me, covertly, as an adventurer and fortune-hunter; it was by a strong effort that I refrained from quarreling with him; and I did so at the earnest entreaty of Alice.

She strove in vain to ascertain whether Heron had gone, the roving life he had adopted making it impossible to trace him; but when her father died and she was left in sole possession of his property, she determined to find the man who she was now satisfied possessed her heart.

It took her nearly a year to trace him. When she discovered that we had started across the plains, she engaged three hunters to accompany her, and followed in pursuit, thus affording her lover another opportunity to save her life.

The rest of the journey passed very pleasantly to all concerned. Alice and Heron accompanied me to New York, where they were married, and are now living. Although Heron considers that his hastiness cost him five years of his life, yet he often refers with pleasure to his wild life as a hunter and guide among the mountains and on the plains.

"Now," he said, "yell as loud as your lungs will permit, but do not fire until we are close upon them, and then make sure of your man. Remember, there is a woman, and we must save her anyway. Go!"

We went. The horses dashed over the plain, and the guide shouted and yelled out his name, something after the manner of a knight of old uttering his battle-cry, and I screamed until I was hoarse. The savages, amazed by this unlooked-for attack, reined in their horses, who reared upon their haunches. We gave them fire point-blank, emptying two saddles, and the next moment the Indians were flying fleetly over the plain.

Never was a victory more easily achieved. We rode back to the timber, where we found the fugitives waiting to receive us.

"You are the very man we are looking for," cried one of the party, an old hunter, advancing to Heron and saluting him as an old acquaintance as he dismounted. "We've got a female here that's been a-looking for you."

"A female?" echoed Heron, in the greatest surprise.

The woman who had formed one of the pursued party now timidly approached Heron.

"Edward!" she murmured, gently.

"Good heavens!—Alice!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," she answered, with an arch smile. "Alice—Alice Layden!"

The next instant they were locked in each other's arms. The hunters and myself drew back discreetly and allowed the lovers to enjoy this unexpected re-union.

Heron soon beckoned to me to join him, introduced me to the pretty Alice, and made known to me the explanation she had given him.

Their separation had been the result of an ingenious plot between Mr. Layden and Oliver Vander. Her father had never intended that she should marry Heron, but had been too politic to openly oppose their union, knowing that love always thrives under persecution; but covertly he used every effort to persuade his daughter that his money and not her affection was the object of Heron's attention. Oliver Vander did his best to confirm this impression in her mind, and thus led her to entertain suspisions which led to the quarrel and estrangement. The announcement in the newspaper had been inserted by Oliver, without any foundation in truth; and when she saw it, she refused to hold any further acquaintance with him.

He had, while thus musing, turned back to the side of his horse, which he now led noiselessly away, till he reached the stream running through the canon. Then, mounting, he rode into the water and directed his course down-stream. After going a mile, he turned from the canon, and entered the heavy timber beyond. An hour longer, and he found himself at the edge of a narrow valley whose opposite side was overshadowed by rocky cliffs, a thousand feet high.

He halted in the deep gloom of the timber, and gazed intently northward. Half a mile away, the valley seemed to end in low cliffs, and huge boulders that had evidently thundered down from the dizzy heights on his left. But he saw no sign, as yet, of the Navajo camp. Had the band passed on? They were certainly not on his side of the valley, else he would have detected them through the pale starlight.

But his searching eye soon distinguished an opening to the extreme north-west of the valley, leading, he doubted not, out of the mountains. Perhaps the Navajoes were camped near the spot, tethering their horses in the cactus thicket which he made out just beyond.

He saw that, by scouting up half a mile along the edge of the timber, he could turn to the left and gain a point of observation from the low cliffs and boulders. Securing his horse, he began to steal forward on foot, first seeing that his knife and revolvers were in their accustomed places.

It was a full half-hour before he gained the coveted position. Looking down, his eyes met a scene which thrilled him with excitement!

Thirty yards distant appeared a low, hastily-constructed tent, hitherto concealed from his view by groups of cactus. Around it the Navajo warriors lay rolled in their blankets, apparently buried in slumber!

"She is there!" muttered the young trapper.

"The tent was erected to shield her from the cold air! These wretches value their prize. Now, what can be done?"

"Well might he ask the question. The extreme danger and difficulty of his wild scheme were now realized as they had not been before. There was no way of approaching the tent except through the groups of sleeping warriors. The latter evidently had sunk to slumber without posting sentinels; feeling perfectly secure in this isolated spot. But, how slight a noise might arouse them!"

Suppose he were to succeed in gaining the tent unobserved. Would the prisoner be alone?

"I'll go on!" mused the young trapper, setting his teeth. "There's just a chance of my getting safe beside the tent, and, once there, I can soon determine the number within. As for the rest—God help me!"

"I was thinking about the prisoner they had with them. Tell ye what, Hickley, 'twas a white girl! I'm sure of it!"

"Mout be; but more like 'twas a she-greaser they hed."

"You bet," spoke the other trapper, Wat Nealon. "One they swooped up from some out-o'-the-way ranche down the valley."

"I stood nearer than you to the party, remember, when they passed our place of concealment," was Mortimer Renfrew's reply.

"I'll bet the price of our united packs 'twas a white girl."

"Oh, yer will, eh?" said Nealon. "Wal, how're ye gwine ter git at it, hoss? Thar's the."

"Can they do that?" I asked.

He shook his head dubiously.

"I fear not," he replied. "Their horses appear to be jaded, and the Indians are gaining fast upon them. There is a way to save them," he added, with a keen look in my face, "if you dare attempt it with me."

"I'm your man," I cried, a little nettled by the doubt implied upon my courage.

"I'll second you in whatever you do."

He grasped my hand fervently.

"Good!" he responded; "there's the ring of true metal in you. My plan is this: let us mount our horses, take these Indians in the flank, which we can do by skirting this piece of timber, charge them full tilt, and give them the contents of our rifles. They will be dismayed by this sudden attack, and the fugitives will have time to gain the shelter of these trees. Half a dozen determined men could hold a thousand of these red horsemen at bay here, for they never attack on foot, and their arrows are not of much account against rifle-bullets."

The next instant we were in the saddle, with rifle in hand, riding quickly through the trees.

We emerged upon the plain, in full view of the fugitives and their pursuers.

The fugitives consisted of four persons, and, to our great surprise, one of them was a woman. They were urging their horses toward the clump of timber, while close behind them yelling like demons, came twenty, at least, of the fierce, red warriors of the plains.

There was little hope for the fugitives, if our charge did not save them. I shivered as I observed the odds against us, and glanced at Hawk Heron, and that glance reassured me. His eyes were fairly ablaze, and every feature in his face quivered with excitement. His emotion was contagious.

If the Indians had been a hundred instead of twenty, I should not have hesitated.

An hour passed, finding young Renfrew yet awake and somewhat excited.

At length he rose to a sitting posture and glanced over his sleeping companions.

"It's strange!" he mused. "I seem to see the face of that girl-prisoner, and can't get it out o' my mind. And to think she's at this very moment not more than five miles away—destined to be the mistress of a chief, or perhaps sacrificed in some of their horrid rites! And yet these men are right—to undertake any thing for her—too wild, too wild!"

He lay down again, beside his companions. But sleep he could not. Flitting before his

mental vision was a wild, agonized face, with eyes imploring him for help. He had not been near enough to distinguish the features of the prisoner as she was hurried along; but now, in his excited imagination, he saw them as those of one he had long lost sight of and hoped to forget.

"Good God!" he at last muttered, half-aloud, again rising up. "Is it a presentiment? Then why do those loved features, full of agony, present themselves as they have not before during three years? No—no!—tis impossible! It's all fancy—fancy of the worst kind, for it revives the old feeling of the Indians."

"Glancing again over his sleeping comrades, he walked lightly away to where their horses were tethered in a deep thicket. He assured himself the animals were secure, and then turned back; but do what he might, the picture of that face, white with fear, became more and more impressed on his mind.

"Here!" he muttered, at last; "go alone, to the Navajo camp, if I die for it! Some things seem to urge me, and I'll obey. If it be only a morbid fancy, I alone shall suffer for it. And suppose I do die? who's there to mourn for me except these two rough, though noble-hearted, men. No—I won't wake them. They'd only oppose me, and I ought not try to persuade them. Besides, if any thing can be done, one would be more apt to succeed than three."

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MORAL AND PHYSICAL SUASION.

A pair-of-rays from the Vulgate of Webster.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

Once on a time, an aged character Of apparelled in a pointed cap, Saw in the foliage of his apple tree A youthful semblance of the future man; Stifling the orifice in his countenance With that most favorite fruit, infinite zeal. Then did he chercerly exhortatives Polish'd, and put upon his head's bald top, And, casting both his wide observatories On that young cedar-mill up in the tree, He said, "My dear young friend, it seems quite clear that you had best come down out of that there." The young chap answered and said unto him, "I can not see it in that light, old boss; And that is what the matter is with Hannah," Cried the old fellow, and went silent; While to his master nose he put his thumb, And all his other fingers wagged at him, Then went to laying in his winter's fruit. The old man said, "Then I will fetch you down." So he took a palm and stems of grass, Which made this young emblem of mankind laugh, and chased in more apples with a vim, Not even stopping for the corse and stems. Said the old man, "If neither words nor grass Can have the power to soften you down young man, then try with soldiers, for I am in earnest. Then did he peat him to his heart's content With wrathful stones, uncareful where they hit, Until the sport got rather full of fun. And that young man remorsefully came down!"

Strange Stories.

THE TREE OF DEATH;
or,
The Law of Java.

BY AGILE PENNE.

The full, round moon shone down brightly upon the private gardens of the emperor's palace, in the pleasant Isle of Java, far down in the southern seas.

The soft breezes of the night whispered through the hanging leaves, and the very air was redolent with the perfume of flowers.

In the midst of the rose-trees, stood the fairest flower that all the Isle of Java held—Leila the daughter of Java's emperor, his only child.

Leila was tall and straight as the palm-tree, yet possessed of all the grace and lightness of the swaying vine. Eyes and hair black as jet, lips like the rose-leaf, and her skin was fairer than the pearls that adorned her neck.

Leila waited by the rose-trees.

Why waited the daughter of the proud Emperor, Abdallah the Third, in the garden on that summer's night?

A step sounded amid the shrubbery of the garden.

Leila turned, more annoyed than alarmed.

A manly figure approached.

The rich dress, the jewel-hilted saber, the diamonds that sparkled in the young man's turban—for he was young—all told that he was a person of rank.

It was the Emir, Hassan, one of the highest nobles in the island, and allied by birth to the emperor.

"Leila!" he exclaimed in astonishment, on beholding her standing like a statue among the flowers.

Leila pouted in disdain but answered not.

"I thank my good stars that directed my feet bither," said the Emir, gallantly, approaching the girl. "Let me seize this opportunity to tell the Flower of Java's Isle how much she is loved."

Again Leila replied not, but turned away, disdainfully.

"Why do you turn from me?" he asked.

"Your father approves my suit."

"So does not my father's daughter!" exclaimed Leila, in clear, sweet tones.

"And why not?"

Leila made no answer, but plucked a rose from the bush and idly pulled it to pieces.

"You treat me as cruelly as you do that flower," he said, softly. "Shall I tell you why you will not love me?"

Leila looked at the Emir in astonishment.

"Because you love another!"

The girl blushed crimson.

"Let him beware! If he crosses my path, he looks upon his death!" Hassan said, fiercely.

"Find my lover; then speak your threats," replied the girl, scornfully. "For the present your company is distasteful to me. Shall I go, or will you?"

"Before many hours are over, you may regret your words!" Hassan said, angrily, and then stalked away amid the bushes.

Leila laughed, lowly but merrily, when her tall form was hidden by the foliage from her sight.

Hassan had not been gone five minutes, when Leila heard another step in the shrubbery. This time it came from the direction of the wall that surrounded the garden.

The tread was cautious, as though fearful of causing an alarm.

Leila listened with sparkling eyes, lips apart, and a heaving bosom; signs of joy—of love.

And then, a tall, lithe form, clad in the handsome uniform of the Emperor's Guard, came from the bushes.

Leila looked for an instant into an olive-tinted face, lit up by a pair of sparkling black eyes; a face wherein both honesty and courage were plainly written; and then, with a low cry of joy, gave herself into his arms.

The haughty daughter of Java's proud emperor loved an humble soldier, by name, Ben Liel.

"Light of my heart, once again I hold you in my arms!" the soldier cried, softly. "Once again I can hear your heart beating against mine."

"The heart that beats for you alone!" said Leila, looking up fondly into the handsome face of the young soldier.

"And yet, when I think of the gulf that separates us I am mad with despair. I hold you now to my breast; press your lips freely; I forget all in the joy of the moment. I remember only that you are the most beautiful of women, that your heart is mine, and that I love you better than I do life itself. But, when I am away from you, when my brain is calm, not whirling with passion's fires, then I remember that you are a princess, the daughter of my emperor, and that I am only a poor soldier with nothing in the world but a strong arm, a stout heart, and a sharp saber."

"With you, or away from you, I remember nothing but our love!" cried Leila, with deep passion. "Did you think of the emperor's daughter when in the jungle you threw yourself before the angry tiger, and, at the risk of your own life, saved me from his jaws?"

"No, I only saw the woman that I loved—but whom I had never dared to tell my love—in danger."

"Then, when the brute lay before us, still in death, when your saber was covered with his blood, my attendants gone in horror, and none near to watch us, what did you do?"

"I caught you in my arms, told my love, and received a hundred kisses in reward. Again I forgot you were the princess, and remembered only that you was the woman that I loved!"

A rush of hasty feet, a gleaming of torches amid the rose-trees, and the lovers were surrounded by the emperor and the servants of the palace. Foremost in the throng came the Emir Hassan.

"By Allah! this is too much!" cried the emperor, in rage. "My daughter in the embrace of one of the captains of my guard. Tear them apart and give the slave to the bowstring!"

In an instant the saber of the soldier flashed in the moonlight, while still he held the girl proudly to his breast.

The servants fell back before the glittering steel. They had seen the good right arm of Ben Liel strike lustily on many a gory field. They cared not to taste the shrewd coldness of his blade.

"Let no man lay a finger upon me!" cried the soldier. "Your majesty buckled this saber on my thigh on the battle-field. If you demand it, it is yours."

"Be careful; this young captain is the idol of the soldiers; do nothing without reason," whispered an aged noble in the emperor's ears.

"Give up your sword," the emperor said.

The soldier cast it at his feet.

"You know that you have forfeited your life by being found within these gardens in conversation with my daughter; but, I will be merciful and give you a chance to save your forfeited life. Go to the Tree of Death; bring me a casket of the poisoned gum that flows from the tree and I will spare your life."

Leila started in joy.

Leila uttered a cry of joy.

"I have done your mission, and there is the proof!" cried Ben Liel, dashing the casket down at the emperor's feet. "Now, then, I am a free man, and have the right to claim a boon. Is it not so?" he asked.

"It is," replied the emperor, turning slightly pale. "What will you have, a house and land or a golden reward?"

"I claim the hand of your daughter, Leila!" cried the soldier, firmly.

All within the hall started with amazement, and one old gray-haired noble slipped through the doorway, taking advantage of the confusion.

forever, and what is life without the woman I love?"

"Nothing," said the other, slowly. Then for a moment he was silent in thought. "Ben Liel," he said, suddenly, "do you remember the fight at Alcaba?"

"Yes."

"A huge trooper of the foe held me prostrate beneath his sabre; you, at the risk of your own life, saved mine."

"Life for life. I'll requite the service. I will go to the Tree of Death and procure the poison. The vapor will not act on me as on you. I am seasoned to it; besides, I am sick of life and wish to die. No words, if you love the man whose life you saved."

He seized the iron casket and ran from the hut.

In an hour he staggered in, and, falling, laid the casket at Ben Liel's feet.

"I am dying," he muttered; "the vapor has poisoned me, but you are saved! Nay, more; you have a weapon in your hand, by means of which you can make your enemies tremble. Bow your head, that I may whisper in your ear the Law of Java."

We will now return to the emperor's palace.

The troopers had waited four and twenty hours. Ben Liel had not returned, and so, thinking him dead, they returned and reported the fact.

The Princess Leila was crushed with sorrow.

Abdallah, the emperor, determined to wed her to Hassan at once.

Leila, motionless as a statue, said neither yes nor no.

The bridal party were gathered in the great chamber, when, suddenly, the ringing step of a Javanese warrior sounded in the hall. His head and breast were covered with steel; the saber rattled on his thigh, and under his arm he bore an iron casket. It was Ben Liel!

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"I have brought a casket of poison from the Tree of Death. For that act I am entitled to a free pardon, and the right to ask one favor at your hands, which you are bound to grant. It is the Law of Java! Call your wise judges! I demand nothing but justice!"

Refuse me and five hundred swords without

will leap from their scabbards at my bidding.

Emperor though you are, yet you

can not break the Javanese law!" Clear as

a clarion's note rang his bold defiance.

The gray-headed noble returned in haste.

"The guards without are in revolt," he

whispered in Abdallah's ear; "the soldier

has the law on his side; refuse him, and

your throne is lost!"

But, I may be longer."

"You are going to almost certain death;

but three men have ever returned from the

Tree of Death," replied the officer.

With a pale face, but an unshrinking heart, Ben Liel entered the valley.

He found the lone house and entered it.

The keeper, a man with a withered frame, a pale face, and the air of a corpse, rose to receive him.

The two looked at each other for a moment in astonishment, and then sprung into each other's arms.

They had served throughout a whole campaign together!

"You here?" cried Ben Liel.

"Yes; in a duel I killed the commander of my squadron. This is my punishment.

What have you done?"

The young soldier related what had occurred.

"But tell me, what is this Tree of Death?" he asked.

"It is the deadly upas tree; the vapor

that exhales from it is fatal to life, bird,

beast or human, except when the wind

blows from the north; then, one may venture

to approach the tree through this ravine, but the risk is great, for the wind is fickle and apt to change. The task you have to do is to take this iron casket and fill it full of the gum that exudes from the trunk of the tree. It is used to poison the arrows of our soldiers, that they may do deadly execution."

"But, can I not tell how blows the wind here?"

"No; not until you reach the little valley in which the tree stands. The way

there is plainly marked by the bones that

whiten on the earth; the bones of those

killed by this deadly vapor. You can see

its effect on me. It has made me a living

corpse; yet I am supposed to be far beyond its influence."

"Give me the casket and your hand," said the soldier. "I'll say farewell until we meet Allah above. I have little wish to live, for even if I succeed in escaping from this Tree of Death, my Leila is lost to me, and at the risk of your own life, saved me from his jaws!"

"No, I only saw the woman that I loved—but whom I had never dared to tell my love—in danger."

"The heart that beats for you alone!" said Leila, looking up fondly into the handsome face of the young soldier.

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